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with that which prevails in this country. But this is a subject too important to be despatched in a summary manner, and in the brief space remaining at the close of our article.

ART. VI. — *Dr. Channing.*

The Ministry for the Poor. A Discourse, delivered before the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches in Boston, on their first Anniversary, April 9th, 1835. By WILLIAM E. CHANNING. Boston. 1835.

WE said in our last number, that we considered Mr. Irving the best living writer of English prose. If we could be induced to withdraw or in some degree to qualify this remark, we think that it would be in favor of the author of this discourse : — and it is creditable to the literary character of the country, that the competition for the palm of the highest excellence in writing English, should now be between the different American authors. Such has been the rapid progress of our literature since the very recent period, when it was inquired, with some degree of plausibility, in a respectable English review : — *who reads an American book?* As respects the mere form of language, we rather give the preference to the style of Dr. Channing. It is equally elegant, and a little more pure, correct and pointed than that of Mr. Irving. In reality, however, these two distinguished persons can hardly be said to come into competition. — Elegance, correctness, purity, power, and point in the use of language, though essential, are after all, only superficial qualities ; — the outward flourishes and ornaments of a good style ; — of which the substantial part, — the *soul*, as Shakspeare has it, — is the sense ; and here these two writers work with different materials, and belong to different classes. Mr. Irving is properly a poet : Dr. Channing a philosopher. Mr. Irving's field of observation is the surface of nature ; and whether he undertakes to give us the result in the form of a portrait or a fancy-piece, it is still a picture : — a vivid and beautiful representation of the many-colored hues, that compose the brilliant and ever-varying outside of society. Dr. Channing, on the other hand, deals in general truths : — he looks through the external forms of things in search of the

secret and mysterious principles of thought, action and being. He takes little notice of the varieties of manners and character, that form the favorite topics of the novelist and poet. Mind in the abstract, its nature, properties and destiny, are his constant theme. He looks at material objects chiefly as the visible expressions of the existence, character and will of the sublime Unseen Intelligence, whose power created, and whose presence informs and sustains the universe.

Writers, whose favorite fields of observation are so different, cannot, of course, with propriety, be compared together. Each has peculiar advantages for acquiring reputation. The poet addresses a larger circle of readers, and one more susceptible of excitement : he sings to young men and maidens, — *virginibus puerisque*, — and his themes are of such a kind that they awaken interest in every heart, without the necessity of previous preparation or study.

“ His dream of light,
From morn till night,
Is Love, — still Love.”

In displaying his golden visions to the public eye, he is able to avail himself of a thousand adventitious advantages. Sometimes he presents an actual image of life in the drama, which has always been regarded as the most attractive form of poetry, although perverted too generally to the worst moral purposes. Then the illusions of dress, scenery, music, and the exquisite charm of versification, lend their aid to interest the delighted audience in his favor. Sympathy exerts for him her magic power over crowds of assembled listeners. When, at other times, his thoughts that breathe and words that burn burst forth in song, their effect is enhanced by the accompaniment of the human voice, the most powerful of musical instruments, whose rich, deep, and melodious tones seem to thrill through the frame with a sort of mysterious influence, and awaken emotions which speculative reason could never account for. If, like Mr. Irving, avoiding these highest exercises of his art, he contents himself with preparing for the quiet contemplation of the closet, his silent pictures of life and nature, their subjects are of such a kind as to engage with irresistible power the attention of the multitude. Age forgets his infirmities, — maturity his cares, — as they hang entranced over the pages of Romance ; — while youth, — warm-hearted, inexperienced, confident, enthusiastic youth, — receives them with implicit

faith, as a true image of that fairy paradise of innocence and happiness, which his eye of hope delights to behold in the yet untried world. Hence, as we have said, the poet is the worshipped one of the multitude, and especially of the fair and young. Beauty weaves her chaplet of roses for his living brow, and scatters her funeral cypress on his tomb. He realizes the reward that octogenarian Darwin, with more gallantry than good taste in style, anticipated for himself.

“ So shall my lines soft-rolling eyes engage,
And snow-white fingers turn the *volant* page ;
The smiles of beauty every toil repay,
And youths and virgins chant the living lay.”

The philosopher, on the other hand, deals in topics less immediately attractive, perhaps, but fitted to awaken a more deep and enduring, — a sublimer and a holier interest. God, man, and the universe are the noble objects of his study ; and if he bring to them an ability and spirit in any way suited to their importance, it is easy to imagine that the result must be, as it is represented in the enthusiastic language of Milton,

“ Not rough and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo’s lute ;
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.”

If his voice fall less sweetly on the sensitive ear of youth than that of the poet, it attracts to deeper attention the thoughtful spirits of every period of life. Overlooking the graceful forms and glowing colors that embellish the surface of nature, the philosopher unfolds the mysteries of mind, ascertains the principles of thought, feeling and action, and deduces from them the rules of conduct for the government of public and private life. The fathers of the people, the rulers of nations look to him to furnish the eternal rock of principle, upon which the fabric of every permanent political and social institution must be founded. He rises above the great men in active life of his day and country, and becomes the lawgiver of ages. Even this, extensive as it is, is only his inferior and secondary sphere of action. He looks beyond the Finite, even in its highest and most important forms, to the Infinite. His comprehensive grasp of intellect embraces the future and eternal, as well as the present passing condition of things. He sees in the ever-changing Appearances of the world around him only the expressions of a permanent, substantial Reality ; he follows out the

fleeting forms of Time and Space, till they lose themselves in the illimitable oceans of Immensity and Eternity. He explores the mysteries of mind, from the faint and feeble ray with which it twinkles in the human intelligence, to that high and holy seat of clouded majesty, where the original fountains of Wisdom, Love and Power centre in the great, all-creating, all-informing Sun and Soul of the Universe.

Nor is the philosopher destitute of adventitious aids, to heighten the effect upon the people, of his solemn meditations upon these all-important themes. If music, painting, sculpture, declamation and verse, in all their variously attractive graces, lend their aid to the poet, eloquence, — a sister art, in its highest exhibitions more enchanting if possible to the intellectual ear than any of the others, — eloquence, alike in its written and spoken forms, — is the handmaid of philosophy. Even in the silence of the closet, the elegant language and beautiful imagery of Plato, Cicero, Fenelon or Stewart, steal with irresistible attraction on the mind, and open, as it were with a golden key, its inmost recesses, to receive the sublime truths, that are clothed in so charming a dress. But when to this seductive source of influence is added the mysterious power of the human voice ; not running through a series of curiously modulated, artificial notes, but breathing its pure, simple, natural tones, only with augmented power, solemnity and pathos ; — when Cicero, Chatham, or Ames gives this thrilling, heart-stirring accompaniment to the highest wisdom, as applied to affairs of state ; — when Bossuet, Taylor or Channing attunes it to the solemn doctrines of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come ; — when we feel at the time, that this is no matter of sport and display, but the trial of a cause, not merely of life and death, but of eternity, in which we are ourselves at once the audience and the parties : — we must admit that philosophy, so enforced, has but little reason, in the way of effect, to envy her seductive sister.

Our readers will be nearly ready by this time to say, with the prince in *Rasselas* : “ Enough ! you have satisfied us that no man can ever be either a poet or a philosopher.” In reality, however, it is necessary to the highest excellence in either character, that the qualities required for both should be combined in the same person, and we find them, in fact, exhibited in combination in the works of the few gifted men, who have been acknowledged as the masters in either, and as making

some approach to the *ideal* of perfection. In Shakspeare, for example, we see in combination with the richest and most exuberant imagination, an originality, depth, and precision of thought on general subjects, that would have placed him, had he devoted himself more directly to its exercise, at the head of moral science. In like manner, the Platos, the Ciceros, the Johnsons, the Stewarts display, though in somewhat chastened forms, all the essential elements of poetry. To arrive at the highest excellence in either department requires, as we have seen, a mind complete in all its faculties. The question, which of these shall take a lead, and give a character to the joint result of the whole, will be determined, probably, by accidental circumstances, — such as the nature of professional pursuits, or the period of life when production is called for. In youth, imagination is predominant, and thought operates in a subsidiary and secondary line. If the mind is then prompted to exertion, the product will be poetry. In maturer years, the “seraph contemplation” assumes the ascendancy ; — the flower of learning fades, and yields its place to the richer, but somewhat less brilliant fruit. Varieties in professional pursuits obviously tend to a similar difference in the result. But we have not room to enlarge any farther upon these general topics, and must hasten to our immediate subject.

Without intending to intimate, that Mr. Irving and Dr. Channing realize the idea of a perfect poet and philosopher, we may say, perhaps with safety, that they are not excelled in their respective departments by any living English or American writers. Mr. Irving has not attempted indeed to give to the beautiful creations of his fancy the high finish of versification, and to judge from the few slight attempts in that way which we have seen from his pen, he does not possess this talent, even to the moderate extent which is frequent among writers of far inferior power. But though verse presents itself in the infancy of learning as the most natural method of giving smoothness to language, it may perhaps be doubted, whether the melody of measured prose has not, for cultivated ears, a still more exquisite charm. At all events, the effect of such prose as that of Mr. Irving can be exceeded only by verse of the very first order, and of this we have little or none from the present race of professed poets. Philosophy, it is well known, has for some time past been an almost abandoned field in English literature, and to say that Dr. Channing is now one of its most success-

ful cultivators, is giving him by no means extravagant praise. Among the present or recent philosophical writers in our own language, we know of no one who has exhibited so much originality, depth and power of thought, so happily combined with the vigor and beauty of language, that are necessary to give them effect. Stewart, by far the most distinguished of the English philosophers, who have lived since Adam Smith, was a beautiful writer, and possessed a large store of book learning, which he has digested into several interesting systematic works. But such works are not the forms, in which a strong power of original thought delights to manifest itself; they are rather in general the labors of patient mediocrity upon the bolder and perhaps irregular efforts of higher minds. Stewart had accordingly but little originality. He pursues with patience the track of the masters whom he venerated, smoothing obstructions, — removing difficulties, — scattering flowers as he goes, — but he strikes out no new paths. Mackintosh, with an equal elegance of taste, had a higher power of thought, but his works have done no justice to his talent. Coleridge, who is now extolled by some of his admirers, especially on this side of the Atlantic, where his reputation, singularly enough, is greater than in England, — as the first of philosophers, and, as such, the “greatest man of the age,” appears to us, we must own, to possess very slender claims to this transcendent distinction. He possessed undoubtedly a mind of a very high order, and was particularly fitted to excel in poetry, of which he has given some exquisite specimens; but even here the fatal influence of indolence, or some other still more pernicious principle, has prevented him from doing himself justice. In his philosophical writings, he shews a great deal of reading, but an almost total want of clearness and precision of thought. His mind seems to be swelling and laboring with a chaos of imaginations, which he has not reduced to shape, and of which he is of course incapable himself of estimating the real value. The only principle that stands out in some degree conspicuously in the midst of this confusion, and which he seems to have intended to make the corner-stone of his system, is a supposed distinction between Reason and Understanding, or in his own phraseology, *the Reason* and *the Understanding*, which we consider as wholly imaginary, and which, whether well or ill founded, has been for more than half a century the basis of the German transcendental metaphysics, and of course can entitle

Coleridge to no great credit on the score of original power. Nor has he, as far as we can perceive, succeeded in establishing this principle, or even making it distinctly intelligible to his readers. A person who is curious on the subject will learn more from the first ten pages of Kant's *Criticism on Pure Reason*, where the supposed distinction, such as it is, is intelligibly stated, than from the whole of Coleridge's never-ending, still-beginning attempts to explain it, in which the English language breaks down under him at every step. Thomas Carline is, we think, the most profound and original of the living English philosophical writers. He is the person, to whom we look with the greatest confidence to give a new spring and direction to these studies in the mother country. In fact, the sceptre of philosophy, though it seems to have passed from Germany to France, where it is now wielded by the distinguished Cousin, still lingers on the continent of Europe, and will not probably be transferred very soon to England. Coleridge and Carline are both, like Cousin himself, disciples of the German transcendental school.

It is no very extravagant praise, therefore, to say that Dr. Channing is not excelled by any one of the recent English writers on philosophy. His mind, like most others of a truly rich and substantial character, has put forth its powers successively in a long course of gradual development. He distinguished himself, it is true, very early as a preacher, but his first efforts in this line have been much excelled by those of more recent date. The first productions, by which he made himself known to the public beyond the sphere of his immediate professional circle, were, like some of the more elaborate of his earlier sermons, controversial essays on disputed points in dogmatical divinity. These, though not perhaps among the very best of his writings, have contributed a good deal to extend his reputation, because they interested in his favor the sympathies of an active, intelligent and constantly increasing, though not at present very numerous class of Christians. The Calvinistic creed had been, under some one of its different modifications, the prevailing belief of New England from the first settlement of the colonies till towards the close of the last century, when there grew up here, as in Great Britain, under the influence of the general tendency of the age towards inquiry, a disposition to attempt a reform in this celebrated system. This disposition spread itself silently and gradually for some years, until it had

become quite prevalent in this neighborhood at the commencement of the present century, when Dr. Channing began his labors as a preacher. He adopted the new opinions, with the zeal that was natural to his temperament and period of life ;— explained them in his sermons, — defended them in controversial tracts, — and sustained them before the public by the influence of his respected name and character. After the decease of some other eminent apostles of the same faith, who were nearly contemporary with him, he became the acknowledged leader of the sect in this country, and has been even looked to of late by its members in England as their most efficient champion. This position in reference to the British Unitarians has contributed, as we have said, to extend his reputation abroad, by overcoming in his favor the reluctance natural to writers of all nations, and especially the English writers in regard to this country, to acknowledge merit in a foreigner. Conscious of the advantage which they derived from his labors, and proud of the lustre which his talent and eloquence gave to the common creed, the British Unitarians forgave Dr. Channing for being an American, and commended his works in their journals with as much heartiness, as if he had been born within the four seas ; — a concession which the national pride never makes except under the influence of some extraordinary motive to mere literary desert. His writings were, in this way, brought before the public eye in England, and having thus attracted general attention, have been noticed with approbation in quarters wholly independent of any partisan influence, although the leading reviews have not yet done them full justice.

Without entering at all into the merits of these controversies, we may be permitted to say that Dr. Channing, in the part which he has taken in them, has never been betrayed by the ardor of discussion into intemperance in language or extravagance in doctrine. His controversial sermons and tracts exhibit uniformly the decorous forms of expression and the gentle and tolerant spirit, which, while they are graceful in all men, are more especially becoming in a minister of religion. In the ardor with which he embraces his own opinions, and seeks to demonstrate the errors of his opponents, he is not, like so many other reformers, hurried away into still more dangerous errors of an opposite character. The substantial truths of religion, natural and revealed, which form the common basis of the

various creeds of all the sects, and are admitted alike by all, as of primary importance, have rarely if ever obtained a more vigorous support, than they have found in the tongue and pen of this eloquent apostle of Christianity. His controversial essays may therefore be regarded as models of this kind of writing; but we do not, as we have said, consider them as precisely the best of his productions, for the reason that controversial writing, however well managed, is not the most favorable field for the exercise of a really superior talent. Controversy generally turns upon topics of secondary importance, and which are interesting to us chiefly because they are subjects of controversy. We mean not to say that it is always useless, or that even when of no great direct advantage, it may not indirectly have its value. It serves as an exercise of intellect, and often leads to researches that develop principles and facts of real importance. Thus the alchemists, in their efforts to discover the chimerical philosopher's stone, and elixir of life, laid the foundation of the science of chemistry. But the interest which controversy creates for the time on topics of inferior interest, tends to withdraw the attention from those of higher importance, about which there can be no dispute. The great truths which form the basis of all our happiness and hopes, are as clear to the understanding as the sun is to the eye, and are the objects of almost as general a belief. To bring them home with power, not to the understanding which does not require to be convinced, but to the hearts of men, where their influence is counteracted by the passions; — this is the triumph of talent and eloquence, and anything which has the effect of diverting the highest minds from turning their labors into this direction, is a real disadvantage to the community.

The reputation which Dr. Channing had acquired by his sermons and controversial tracts, was extended and placed upon a firmer basis by several articles, written for the *Christian Examiner*, — the most important of which were upon the characters of Milton and Bonaparte. They have since been republished in a collection of the author's writings, and furnish perhaps more decided evidence than any other single productions of the extent of his powers.

The article on Milton was suggested by his *Essay on Christian Doctrine*, which, as our readers will remember, was discovered in manuscript and first published a few years ago. Dr. Channing has not, however, confined himself to an exam-

ination of this treatise, but has gone at large into a survey of Milton's character and principal productions, — touching incidentally upon such general questions in criticism and philosophy as came in his way. Of these digressions, the passage on the nature and office of poetry is the most powerful, and, though doubtless familiar to many of our readers, will be read with pleasure.

“ By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered only as giving him a high rank among the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect, he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the conscious dignity of a prophet. We agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry. It seems to us the divinest of all arts ; for it is the breathing or expression of that principle or sentiment, which is deepest and sublimest in human nature ; we mean, of that thirst or aspiration, to which no mind is wholly a stranger, for something purer and lovelier, something more powerful, lofty, and thrilling than ordinary and real life affords. No doctrine is more common among Christians than that of man's immortality ; but it is not so generally understood, that the germs or principles of his whole future being are *now* wrapped up in his soul, as the rudiments of the future plant in the seed. As a necessary result of this constitution, the soul, possessed and moved by these mighty though infant energies, is perpetually stretching beyond what is present and visible, struggling against the bounds of its earthly prison-house, and seeking relief and joy in imaginings of unseen and ideal being. This view of our nature, which has never been fully developed, and which goes farther towards explaining the contradictions of human life than all others, carries us to the very foundation and sources of poetry. He who cannot interpret by his own consciousness what we now have said, wants the true key to works of genius. He has not penetrated those sacred recesses of the soul, where poetry is born and nourished, and inhales immortal vigor, and wings herself for her heavenward flight. In an intellectual nature, framed for progress and for higher modes of being, there must be creative energies, powers of original and ever growing thought ; and poetry is the form in which these energies are chiefly manifested. It is the glorious prerogative of this art, that it ‘ makes all things new’ for the gratification of a divine instinct. It indeed finds its elements in what it actually sees and experiences, in the worlds of matter and mind ; but it combines and blends these into new forms and according to new affinities ; breaks down, if we may so say, the distinctions and bounds of na-

ture ; imparts to material objects life, and sentiment, and emotion, and invests the mind with the powers and splendors of the outward creation ; describes the surrounding universe in the colors which the passions throw over it, and depicts the soul in those modes of repose or agitation, of tenderness or sublime emotion, which manifest its thirst for a more powerful and joyful existence. To a man of a literal and prosaic character, the mind may seem lawless in these workings ; but it observes higher laws than it transgresses, the laws of the immortal intellect ; it is trying and developing its best faculties ; and in the objects which it describes, or in the emotions which it awakens, anticipates those states of progressive power, splendor, beauty, and happiness, for which it was created.

We accordingly believe that poetry, far from injuring society, is one of the great instruments of its refinement and exaltation. It lifts the mind above ordinary life, gives it a respite from depressing cares, and awakens the consciousness of its affinity with what is pure and noble. In its legitimate and highest efforts, it has the same tendency and aim with Christianity ; that is, to spiritualize our nature. True, poetry has been made the instrument of vice, the pander of bad passions ; but when genius thus stoops, it dims its fires, and parts with much of its power ; and even when poetry is enslaved to licentiousness or misanthropy, she cannot wholly forget her true vocation. Strains of pure feeling, touches of tenderness, images of innocent happiness, sympathies with suffering virtue, bursts of scorn or indignation at the hollowness of the world, passages true to our moral nature, often escape in an immoral work, and show us how hard it is for a gifted spirit to divorce itself wholly from what is good. Poetry has a natural alliance with our best affections. It delights in the beauty and sublimity of the outward creation and of the soul. It indeed portrays, with terrible energy, the excesses of the passions ; but they are passions which show a mighty nature, which are full of power, which command awe, and excite a deep though shuddering sympathy. Its great tendency and purpose is, to carry the mind beyond and above the beaten, dusty, weary walks of ordinary life ; to lift it into a purer element ; and to breathe into it more profound and generous emotion. It reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of early feeling, revives the relish of simple pleasures, keeps unquenched the enthusiasm which warmed the spring-time of our being, refines youthful love, strengthens our interest in human nature by vivid delineations of its tenderest and loftiest feelings, spreads our sympathies over all classes of society, knits us by new ties with universal being, and, through the brightness of its prophetic visions, helps faith to lay hold on the future life.

“We are aware, that it is objected to poetry, that it gives wrong views and excites false expectations of life, peoples the mind with shadows and illusions, and builds up imagination on the ruins of wisdom. That there is a wisdom, against which poetry wars, the wisdom of the senses, which makes physical comfort and gratification the supreme good, and wealth the chief interest of life, we do not deny ; nor do we deem it the least service which poetry renders to mankind, that it redeems them from the thralldom of this earth-born prudence. But, passing over this topic, we would observe, that the complaint against poetry as abounding in illusion and deception, is in the main groundless. In many poems, there is more of truth than in many histories and philosophic theories. The fictions of genius are often the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being. In poetry, when the letter is falsehood, the spirit is often profoundest wisdom. And if truth thus dwells in the boldest fictions of the poet, much more may it be expected in his delineations of life ; for the present life, which is the first stage of the immortal mind, abounds in the materials of poetry, and it is the high office of the bard to detect this divine element among the grosser labors and pleasures of our earthly being. The present life is not wholly prosaic, precise, tame and finite. To the gifted eye, it abounds in the poetic. The affections, which spread beyond ourselves and stretch far into futurity ; the workings of mighty passions, which seem to arm the soul with an almost superhuman energy ; the innocent and irrepressible joy of infancy ; the bloom, and buoyancy, and dazzling hopes of youth ; the throbings of the heart, when it first wakes to love, and dreams of a happiness too vast for earth ; woman, with her beauty, and grace, and gentleness, and fulness of feeling, and depth of affection, and blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother’s heart can inspire ; — these are all poetical. It is not true that the poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life’s ethereal essence, arrests and condenses its volatile fragrance, brings together its scattered beauties, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys. And in this he does well ; for it is good to feel that life is not wholly usurped by cares for subsistence, and physical gratifications, but admits, in measures which may be indefinitely enlarged, sentiments and delights worthy of a higher being. This power of poetry to refine our views of life and happiness, is more and more needed as society advances. It is needed to withstand the encroachments of heartless and artificial manners, which make civilization so tame and uninteresting. It is needed to counteract the tendency of physical science, which being now sought, not, as formerly, for intellectual gratification, but for mul-

tipling bodily comforts, requires a new development of imagination, taste, and poetry, to preserve men from sinking into an earthly, material, Epicurean life."

In some of these remarks, which are in the main as correct and just as they are beautifully expressed, the office of poetry is perhaps extended a little beyond the limits, which a rigid analysis of the intellect would prescribe. The aspiration after a higher and better state of being, the "stretching beyond what is present and visible," which is one of the noblest characteristics of the mind, and which has often been regarded as one of the strongest evidences of its immortality, seems to find its appropriate manifestation, not so much, as Dr. Channing supposes, in poetry, as in those researches into the nature, origin and destiny of the mind, and its relations to the Supreme Intelligence, which we have described above as the office of Philosophy, or what in the proper acceptation of the term is only another name for the same thing, — Religion. Poetry no doubt occasionally gives a form to these aspirations, as to all the other elements in nature. She has devoted to the expression of them in all languages some of her most exquisite strains, but she also expresses with equal power and deeper pathos the gloomy forebodings of a darker destiny, that have so often, in moments of despondency, overclouded and bewildered the highest minds. Who does not recollect the touching verses, in which the Sicilian bard laments, that while the plants which perish in the autumn revive again the following year, man, — the great, the noble, the wise, — after once finishing his brief course, is doomed to sleep out the cheerless, hopeless, interminable night of the grave? Who has not felt that the stanzas, in which the minstrel of Scotland has repeated and developed the same thought, are far more poetical than the single one in which he presents in conclusion, by way of consolation, the hope of immortality?

"If pity inspire thee, Oh! cease not thy lay!

Mourn, sweetest complainer! man calls thee to mourn;

Oh! soothe him whose pleasures like thine pass away,

Full quickly they pass, but they never return."

Poetry, therefore, whose office it is, as we have said before, to create pictures of all the elements of nature, as they exhibit themselves under real or feigned combinations in action or

passion, spreads upon her pallet with equal freedom, and uses with equal effect the dark and the brilliant colors, that correspond respectively with the lights and shades of life. If in Milton she regales the mental eye with the splendid vision of the opal towers and battlements of Paradise, she can write in Dante with as firm a hand on the portals of a darker abode, — “You that enter here must leave all hope behind.” But the longing after immortality of which we are speaking, prompts the mind to seek some assurance of this sublime and cheering hope; and this is supplied by Philosophy. Philosophy, — Religion, — for, as we have said, we consider them as two names for one and the same thing, — embodies our vague, instinctive aspirations after a higher and better state of being, in distinct principles, and presents them to the mind as ascertained truths. It is in the researches which lead to these results, that the mind, under the influence of such aspirations, finds its natural exercise, and employs most appropriately its “powers of original and ever-growing thought.” If, indeed, there be any well-defined and generally acknowledged distinction among the results of intellectual effort, it is that which separates the provinces of Thought and Imagination, — or, according to Lord Bacon’s familiar classification, of Philosophy and Poetry. Poetry takes from the hands of her more contemplative sister the results to which we have alluded, — the moral certainty of the spiritual nature and high destination of man, — and adorns them with the embellishments which she knows how to spread over every thing she touches. The *Paradise Lost* furnishes itself the most remarkable instance of a work, in which the highest results of thought are presented in connexion with the most brilliant and glowing creations of fancy. The reason why Milton was capable of producing such a work was, that he combined, as all who are capable of the highest excellence must combine, the faculties that belong to Philosophy and Poetry in equal perfection. Divine Philosophy had supplied him with the materials, which Poetry enabled him to work up with so much effect. But we fear that we are growing metaphysical, and perhaps owe an apology to Dr. Channing for subjecting to a strict analysis what was probably intended as a glowing and rapid sketch, rather than a precise exposition of the nature and offices of Poetry.

In his estimate of the poems of Milton, Dr. Channing has exhibited much discrimination and correctness of taste, with a

disposition to render the fullest justice to his subject. While he concedes to Shakspeare the merit of a greater versatility of powers, he considers the *Paradise Lost* as the first of all poems. One of his objects in writing the article was to rescue the fame of Milton from the shadows that had been thrown upon it by the rather unfavorable tone of his *Life* by Dr. Johnson. In his zeal to clear up the fame of Milton, we are not sure that Dr. Channing has not dealt in some respects too harshly with the mighty Rambler; a personage for whom, we are free to say, we entertain a very particular and especial regard. Dr. Johnson has certainly not done justice to Milton, but this was owing, we think, to his political prejudices, and not, as Dr. Channing intimates, to any want of "enthusiasm, creative imagination, or lofty sentiment." The author of *Rasselas*, if he had never written another word, would have amply substantiated, by that work only, his claims to the possession of all these faculties in their fullest perfection. But all his other works are marked by the same general characteristics. The Rambler is one perpetual flow of the purest wisdom, embodied in the richest language. It is from one end to the other, as Cicero says with so much beauty of Aristotle, a river of flowing gold. Why should we find fault with the style, because its merit is not exactly the same with that which we admire in the works of some other great writers? Are there not in the gardens of letters and art, as well as in those of nature, a hundred kinds of beauty, all different and each equally charming in its own way? For ourselves, we look on Dr. Johnson as the master-mind of the last generation. We respect even what we may venture to consider as his errors, for they were generally closely connected with the highest virtues. While we regret that his works are not more voluminous, we rejoice that he was able to do so much. Almost every line that he wrote has a real value. We rejoice more especially that it fell to his lot, — and it was a singular distinction, reserved for him alone among all the human beings that have yet lived, — to furnish in his conversation the materials for a copious and elaborate book, — one of the most instructive and entertaining in the whole compass of literature; — a work, which is quaintly styled by a late writer the *Johnsoniad*, and which, for our own reading, we much prefer to the whole array of modern "degraded epics." What a proof of Dr. Johnson's influence over all who surrounded him, that he was able to impregnate a mind so ordinary as that

of Boswell with the seeds of this *unique* production ! So little, in fact, did the great moralist himself anticipate the value of this indirect creation of his own genius, that when he was informed that Boswell had it in contemplation to write his life, he replied with characteristic energy and decision : “ Sir, if I thought so, I would prevent him by *taking his*.”

Though Dr. Channing has, we think, rather undervalued the merit of Johnson, his remarks on the Life of Milton are highly interesting.

“ We have enlarged on Milton’s character, not only from the pleasure of paying that sacred debt which the mind owes to him who has quickened and delighted it, but from an apprehension that Milton has not yet reaped his due harvest of esteem and veneration. The mists which the prejudices and bigotry of Johnson spread over his bright name, are not yet wholly scattered, though fast passing away. We wish not to disparage Johnson. We could find no pleasure in sacrificing one great man to the *manes* of another. But we owe it to Milton and to other illustrious names, to say, that Johnson has failed of the highest end of biography, which is to give immortality to virtue, and to call forth fervent admiration towards those who have shed splendor on past ages. We acquit Johnson, however, of intentional misrepresentation. He did not, and could not, appreciate Milton. We doubt whether two other minds, having so little in common as those of which we are now speaking, can be found in the higher walks of literature. Johnson was great in his own sphere, but that sphere was comparatively ‘ of the earth,’ whilst Milton’s was only inferior to that of the angels. It was customary, in the day of Johnson’s glory, to call him a giant, to class him with a mighty, but still an earth-born race. Milton we should rank among the seraphs. Johnson’s mind acted chiefly on man’s actual condition, on the realities of life, on the springs of human action, on the passions which now agitate society, and he seems hardly to have dreamed of a higher state of the human mind than was then exhibited. Milton, on the other hand, burned with a deep, yet calm love of moral grandeur and celestial purity. He thought, not so much of what man is, as of what he might become. His own mind was a revelation to him of a higher condition of humanity, and to promote this he thirsted and toiled for freedom, as the element for the growth and improvement of his nature. In religion, Johnson was gloomy and inclined to superstition, and on the subject of government leaned towards absolute power ; and the idea of reforming either, never entered his mind but to disturb and provoke it. The church and the civil polity under which he lived, seemed to him perfect, unless he may have thought that the former would be im-

proved by a larger infusion of Romish rites and doctrines, and the latter by an enlargement of the royal prerogative. Hence a tame acquiescence in the present forms of religion and government, marks his works. Hence we find so little in his writings which is electric and soul-kindling, and which gives the reader a consciousness of being made for a state of loftier thought and feeling than the present. Milton's whole soul, on the contrary, revolted against the maxims of legitimacy, hereditary faith, and servile reverence for established power. He could not brook the bondage to which men had bowed for ages. 'Reformation' was the first word of public warning which broke from his youthful lips, and the hope of it was the solace of his declining years. The difference between Milton and Johnson may be traced, not only in these great features of mind, but in their whole characters. Milton was refined and spiritual in his habits, temperate almost to abstemiousness, and refreshed himself after intellectual effort by music. Johnson inclined to more sensual delights. Milton was exquisitely alive to the outward creation, to sounds, motions, and forms, to natural beauty and grandeur. Johnson, through defect of physical organization, if not through deeper deficiency, had little susceptibility of these pure and delicate pleasures, and would not have exchanged the Strand for the vale of Tempe or the gardens of the Hesperides. How could Johnson be just to Milton? The comparison which we have instituted, has compelled us to notice Johnson's defects. But we trust we are not blind to his merits. His stately march, his pomp and power of language, his strength of thought, his reverence for virtue and religion, his vigorous logic, his practical wisdom, his insight into the springs of human action, and the solemn pathos which occasionally pervades his descriptions of life, and his references to his own history, command our willing admiration. That he wanted enthusiasm and creative imagination and lofty sentiment, was not his fault. We do not blame him for not being Milton? We love intellectual power in all its forms, and delight in the variety of mind. We blame him only that his passions, prejudices, and bigotry engaged him in the unworthy task of obscuring the brighter glory of one of the most gifted and virtuous men. We would even treat what we deem the faults of Johnson with a tenderness approaching respect; for they were results, to a degree which man cannot estimate, of a diseased, irritable, nervous, unhappy physical temperament, and belonged to the body more than to the mind. We only ask the friends of genius not to put their faith in Johnson's delineations of it. His biographical works are tinged with his notoriously strong prejudices, and of all his 'Lives,' we hold that of Milton to be the most apocryphal."

The article on the character of Bonaparte is still more elaborate and powerful than that upon Milton. After all that has been written upon the subject, of which it has fallen to our lot, from peculiar circumstances, to read probably as large a portion as most individuals of the present day, we have no hesitation in saying, that we have met with nothing in the way of a summary delineation of character, superior or even fully equal to this masterly sketch from the pen of Dr. Channing. The work which suggested the article was the *Life of Bonaparte* by Sir Walter Scott; but great as is the merit of Scott as a writer, and valuable as the work itself may be considered, although it is certainly not one of the best of Scott's productions, we hazard little in saying, that there is no passage in it of the same length, to be compared for power and effect to the hundred pages employed in this Review. Châteaubriand, Madame de Stäel, Benjamin Constant, M. de Pradt, in short, almost every writer whose theme was in any way connected with the public affairs of the day, has essayed his strength upon the character of Napoleon; and we need not say, that to carry off the prize from such competitors as those whom we have just mentioned, is no slight praise. But notwithstanding the many brilliant and striking passages to be found in the works of these and other writers upon this subject, we repeat, that we have no recollection of any article or separate work, in which it is treated with so much condensation of thought, vigor and eloquence of style, and substantial justice in the dispensation of praise and censure, as are shewn in this remarkable tract. Madame de Stäel, had she completed either her *Ten Years in Exile*, or her *Considerations on the French Revolution*, would have been naturally led by the course of her subject to undertake a formal and extended examination of the character of Bonaparte, and we know of no European writer of the time who was better fitted or more likely to do it full justice; but most of her works, as they remain to us, were published under his political jurisdiction, and of course are silent respecting him. The work of M. de Châteaubriand, entitled *Bonaparte et les Bourbons*, which we have before us, and have glanced through again for our present purpose, is the one which comes most nearly from the nature of the plan into comparison with that of Dr. Channing; and without disparagement to our distinguished countryman, we may venture, as respects the merely rhetorical artifice and movement of the

style, to place the brilliant and practised pen of the author of the *Genius of Christianity* above his. In most other points, particularly power of thought and calm justice in the estimate of moral and intellectual qualities, Dr. Channing is entitled to the preference. M. de Châteaubriand betrays, too strongly, the bitter spirit of personal and political enmity ; there is too evident a disposition to degrade for political effect a personage whose influence is regarded as dangerous ; or, to speak more correctly, for there seems to be but little of the spirit of calculation in the work, it evinces too clearly an irresistible desire in the author to pour out the long pent-up flood of indignation at private and public wrongs, in the strongest and bitterest terms which the language would furnish, without much attempt at nice discrimination as to their exact propriety. Dr. Channing, on the other hand, unconnected with his great subject by any relation of amity or enmity, political or personal, — *nec beneficio nec injuriâ cognitus*, — brings to his work the calm, reflecting impartiality of a judge. Though in no way dazzled by the splendor of Napoleon's successes in the early part of his career, — though leaning, on the whole, to a rather less favorable estimate of his intellectual and moral qualities than the public opinion of the world has appeared to put upon them, — Dr. Channing has yet avoided entirely the tone of indiscriminate and reckless censure, — acknowledges fairly the good points in the character of his subject, and, on the whole, approaches very nearly, in our view at least, to the precise line of truth.

To have treated with more effect than any other writer, the greatest subject supplied by the history of the present day or of modern Europe, and the one upon which all the greatest writers of the time have essayed their powers, is no ordinary achievement ; and the merit of it may perhaps be considered as enhanced by the fact, that the topic was foreign to Dr. Channing's professional pursuits and studies. But this circumstance, though it illustrates the extent and versatility of his powers, was in itself very favorable to his success, and probably contributed more than any other to give him the calm and steady impartiality which makes one of the greatest merits of the article. So extensive had been the influence of the "Man of Destiny," that even in this remote region, very few persons, who had been at all connected, either by their studies or personal position, with political affairs, could have spoken of his

character with any degree of coolness. It required, perhaps, the absolute independence of the clerical profession, to enable a contemporary to survey with untroubled eye this portentous moral phenomenon, and display it to the world in the "calm lights of mild philosophy."

An able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* bestowed some attention, several years ago, upon Dr. Channing's character of Bonaparte, and appeared to consider it as much too severe, and especially as unduly depreciating the extent of Napoleon's intellectual powers. Dr. Channing, in the course of his remarks, is led to make an estimate of the claims to superiority, in comparison with each other, of the different kinds of greatness. He assigns the first place to *moral* greatness; the next to *intellectual*, "that is, genius, in the highest sense of the word," and places in the third rank the greatness of *action*, the only kind to which he supposes Bonaparte to have had any legitimate pretension. This arrangement stirred the bile of the Scottish critic, who remarked in a tone of sarcasm, that "we in Europe look upon Cæsar, Alexander and Charlemagne as no babies," and significantly intimated that the real object of Dr. Channing, in elevating moral and intellectual greatness above that of action, was to give himself a claim to precedence over the most distinguished characters in public life. We took occasion not long after the appearance of the article, to make a reply to it in treating of the "Tone of British Criticism," and adverted particularly at some length to this classification of the respective claims of the different sorts of great men to comparative superiority. We need not repeat the remarks which we then made, and which have been fully confirmed by our subsequent reflections. We will merely add, that the classification adopted by Dr. Channing has nothing paradoxical about it, but is, on the contrary, sustained by the highest authorities, and coincides in substance with the common opinion of enlightened men. The principles upon which Lord Bacon establishes his scale of precedence, first among sovereigns, and then among subjects, are not materially different. With him, as with Dr. Channing, superiority in action, and especially in military affairs, sinks into a secondary line, and the first places are reserved for intellectual power exercised upon the largest theatre, and for the moral greatness of self-sacrifice in the cause of patriotic duty.

"The true marshallings," says Bacon, "of the degrees of sovereign honor are these : in the first place are the founders of states and commonwealths, such as were Romulus, Cyrus, Cæsar, Othman ; in the second place are lawgivers, which are called second founders or perpetual princes, because they govern by their ordinances after they are gone ; such were Lycurgus, Solon, Edgar, Alphonso of Castile, who made the *Siete Partidas* ; in the third place are such as compound the long miseries of civil wars, or deliver their countries from servitude of strangers or tyrants, as Augustus Cæsar, Vespasian, Aurelian, Theodoric, King Henry the Seventh of England, King Henry the Fourth of France ; in the *fourth place, are such as in honorable wars enlarge their territories, or make defence against invaders* ; and in the last place are the fathers of their country, who reign justly, and make the times good wherein they live. Degrees of honor in subjects, are first those upon whom princes do discharge the greatest weight of their affairs, their right hands, as we may call them ; *the next are great leaders, such as are princes' lieutenants, and do them notable services in the wars* ; the third are favorites, such as exceed not this scantling, to be solace to the sovereign and harmless to the people, and the fourth, such as have great places under princes, and execute their places with sufficiency. There is an honor, likewise, *which may be ranked among the greatest*, which happeneth rarely ; that is, of such as sacrifice themselves to death or danger for the good of their country."

Our readers will be pleased to compare with this sketch, which, though rather brief and meagre, is stamped with the impress of the master-mind from which it proceeded, the more developed and finished form, in which Dr. Channing has presented, with not inferior power and elegance of language, essentially the same principles.

"Such was Napoleon Bonaparte. But some will say, he was still a great man. This we mean not to deny. But we would have it understood, that there are various kinds or orders of greatness, and that the highest did not belong to Bonaparte. There are different orders of greatness. Among these the first rank is unquestionably due to Moral greatness, or magnanimity ; to that sublime energy, by which the soul, smitten with the love of virtue, binds itself indissolubly, for life and for death, to truth and duty ; espouses as its own the interests of human nature ; scorns all meanness and defies all peril ; hears in its own

conscience a voice louder than threatenings and thunders ; withstands all the powers of the universe, which would sever it from the cause of freedom and religion ; reposes an unfaltering trust in God in the darkest hour, and is ever ' ready to be offered up ' on the altar of its country or of mankind. Of this moral greatness, which throws all other forms of greatness into obscurity, we see not a trace in Napoleon. Though clothed with the power of a God, the thought of consecrating himself to the introduction of a new and higher era, to the exaltation of the character and condition of his race, seems never to have dawned on his mind. The spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice seems not to have waged a moment's war with self-will and ambition. His ruling passions, indeed, were singularly at variance with magnanimity. Moral greatness has too much simplicity, is too unostentatious, too self-subsistent, and enters into others' interests with too much heartiness, to live an hour for what Napoleon always lived, to make itself the theme, and gaze, and wonder of a dazzled world. Next to moral, comes Intellectual greatness, or Genius in the highest sense of that word ; and by this, we mean that sublime capacity of thought, through which the soul, smitten with the love of the true and the beautiful, essays to comprehend the universe, soars into the heavens, penetrates the earth, penetrates itself, questions the past, anticipates the future, traces out the general and all-comprehending laws of nature, binds together by innumerable affinities and relations all the objects of its knowledge, rises from the finite and transient to the infinite and the everlasting, frames to itself from its own fulness lovelier and sublimer forms than it beholds, discerns the harmonies between the world within and the world without us, and finds in every region of the universe types and interpreters of its own deep mysteries and glorious inspirations. This is the greatness which belongs to philosophers, and to the master spirits in poetry and the fine arts. — Next comes the greatness of Action ; and by this we mean the sublime power of conceiving bold and extensive plans ; of constructing and bringing to bear on a mighty object a complicated machinery of means, energies, and arrangements, and of accomplishing great outward effects. To this head belongs the greatness of Bonaparte, and that he possessed it, we need not prove, and none will be hardy enough to deny. A man, who raised himself from obscurity to a throne, who changed the face of the world, who made himself felt through powerful and civilized nations, who sent the terror of his name across seas and oceans, whose will was pronounced and feared as destiny, whose donatives were crowns, whose antechamber was thronged by submissive princes, who broke down the awful barrier of the Alps and

made them a highway, and whose fame was spread beyond the bounds of civilization to the steppes of the Cossack, and the deserts of the Arab; a man who has left this record of himself in history, has taken out of our hands the question, whether he shall be called great. All must concede to him a sublime power of action, an energy equal to great effects.

“We are not disposed, however, to consider him as præeminent even in this order of greatness. War was his chief sphere. He gained his ascendancy in Europe by the sword. But war is not the field for the highest active talent, and Napoleon, we suspect, was conscious of this truth. The glory of being the greatest general of his age, would not have satisfied him. He would have scorned to take his place by the side of Marlborough or Turenne. It was as the founder of an empire, which threatened for a time to comprehend the world, and which demanded other talents besides that of war, that he challenged unrivalled fame. And here we question his claim. Here we cannot award him supremacy. The project of universal empire, however imposing, was not original. The revolutionary governments of France had adopted it before; nor can we consider it as a sure indication of greatness, when we remember that the weak and vain mind of Louis XIV., was large enough to cherish it. The question is; Did Napoleon bring to this design the capacity of advancing it by bold and original conceptions, adapted to an age of civilization, and of singular intellectual and moral excitement? Did he discover new foundations of power? Did he frame new bonds of union for subjugated nations? Did he discover, or originate, some common interests by which his empire might be held together? Did he breathe a spirit which should supplant the old national attachments, or did he invent any substitutes for those vulgar instruments of force and corruption, which any and every usurper would have used? Never in the records of time, did the world furnish such materials to work with, such means of modelling nations afresh, of building up a new power, of introducing a new era, as did Europe at the period of the French revolution. Never was the human mind so capable of new impulses. And did Napoleon prove himself equal to the condition of the world? Do we detect one original conception in his means of universal empire? Did he seize on the enthusiasm of his age, that powerful principle, more efficient than arms or policy, and bend it to his purpose? What did he do but follow the beaten track? but apply force and fraud in their very coarsest forms? Napoleon shewed a vulgar mind, when he assumed self-interest as the sole spring of human action. With the sword in one hand and bribes in the other, he imagined himself absolute master of the human mind. The

strength of moral, national, and domestic feeling, he could not comprehend. The finest, and after all, the most powerful elements in human nature, hardly entered into his conceptions of it ; and how then could he have established a durable power over the human race ? We want little more to shew his want of originality and comprehensiveness as the founder of an empire, than the simple fact, that he chose as his chief counsellors Talleyrand and Fouché, names which speak for themselves. We may judge of the greatness of the master spirit, from the minds which he found most congenial with his own. In war, Bonaparte was great ; for he was bold, original and creative. Beyond the camp he indeed shewed talent, but not superior to that of other eminent men."

Dr. Channing's judgment of the moral character of Bonaparte has been sometimes condemned as rather too harsh. We certainly should not be disposed to concur with those, and there are many such, who would degrade him to the rank of a mere ruffian. "There was, on the contrary," as we remarked on a recent occasion, "a seductive softness, a kind of fascination in his manner, which neither man nor woman could resist. He combined in an astonishing, an almost unexampled extent, the loftiest capacity for the highest spheres of *action*, with a strong passion and aptitude for the arts and graces of polished life." But we fear that under this outward mask of softness and elegance, there was very little real benevolence. The remarks of Dr. Channing are, at all events, much less violent than those of some other distinguished writers, although they would perhaps admit of a little qualification, especially in reference to the supposed absence in Bonaparte of any love of pleasure, or of letters and the arts. It appears, in part we believe, from developments that have taken place since Dr. Channing wrote, that the emperor had, in the later periods of his career, relaxed a good deal from the sternness with which in earlier life he resolutely closed his ears against the enchantments of the Italian syrens ; — and it can hardly be denied, that he displayed throughout a very remarkable taste and aptitude for letters and the arts. One of his favorite amusements, while emperor, was to extemporise love-*tales* for the entertainment of the ladies of his court, and he is said to have done it with great power and effect. On the subject of his moral character, Dr. Channing's remarks are as follows :

"We close our view of Bonaparte's character, by saying, that his original propensities, released from restraint, and pampered by

indulgence, to a degree seldom allowed to mortals, grew up into a spirit of despotism as stern and absolute as ever usurped the human heart. The love of power and supremacy absorbed, consumed him. No other passion, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness divided his mind with the passion for dominion and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Before this, duty, honor, love, humanity fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity, to make room for a stranger, who might be more subservient to his power. He was affectionate, we are told, to his brothers and mother; but his brothers, the moment they ceased to be his tools, were disgraced; and his mother, it is said, was not allowed to sit in the presence of her imperial son.* He was sometimes softened, we are told, by the sight of the field of battle strown with the wounded and dead. But if the Moloch of his ambition claimed new heaps of slain to-morrow, it was never denied. With all his sensibility, he gave millions to the sword, with as little compunction as he would have brushed away so many insects which had infested his march. To him, all human will, desire, power, were to bend. His superiority none might question. He insulted the fallen, who had contracted the guilt of opposing his progress; and not even woman's loveliness, and the dignity of a queen, could give shelter from his contumely. His allies were his vassals, nor was their vassalage concealed. Too lofty to use the arts of conciliation, preferring command to persuasion, overbearing, and all-grasping, he spread distrust, exasperation, fear and revenge through Europe; and when the day of retribution came, the old antipathies and mutual jealousies of nations were swallowed up in one burning purpose to prostrate the common tyrant, the universal foe."

Compare with this certainly not very lenient judgment, the unmeasured and fiery invective of M. de Châteaubriand. It may serve to shew that if Dr. Channing has perhaps a little overstepped the line of strict impartiality or charitable construction, he has at all events stopped very far short of the almost frenzied execrations that, in the first consciousness of recovered freedom, burst from the lips of the gallant spirits of France, who had been wrought up almost to madness by a long course of oppression and insult.

* See "America," page 57. We should not give this very unamiable trait of Napoleon's domestic character, but on authority which we cannot question.

“When God sends upon the earth the men who are to execute his judgments, every thing gives way before them ; they have extraordinary success with moderate talents. Born in the midst of civil commotions, these destroyers of the human race derive their principal power from the very miseries to which they owe their being, and from the horror with which these miseries are remembered. It is given to these men to corrupt and belittle : to annihilate honor, to degrade the soul, to defile every thing they touch, to govern by lying, terror and impiety ; to speak all languages, dazzle all eyes and bewilder all understandings ; to make themselves pass for great geniuses, when they are in fact only vulgar villains, for excellence of every kind is inseparable from virtue. Dragging in their train the besotted nations: conquering by force of superior numbers, dishonored by a hundred victories, brandishing a blazing torch in their hands and bathing their feet in rivers of blood, they rush on to the ends of the earth, like drunken men, urged forward by the God whom they deny.

“When, on the other hand, the Almighty wills to save and not to punish an empire ; when he employs his servants and not his executioners ; when he destines those whom he sends forth to honorable fame and not to universal infamy, far from making their way easy like that of Bonaparte, he raises up before them obstacles worthy of their virtues. It is in this that we may distinguish the tyrant from the deliverer, the ravager of nations from the great captain, the man sent to destroy from the man sent to reform. One is master of every thing and employs immense resources to accomplish his objects ; the other effects important ends with slender means : it is easy to recognise at the first glance in the former, the character and mission of the ravager of France.

“Bonaparte is a false great man ; he wants the magnanimity which makes men truly great. The distinctive trait in his character is an invincible obstinacy, a will of iron, I mean for carrying through extravagant and unjust projects, for he easily abandons such as are favorable to good morals, to order, and to virtue. His plans are not the result of reflection, but of sudden impulses. There is something theatrical about him, and he feigns every thing, even to bursts of anger, which he does not feel. He is always acting a part of some kind. Thus at Cairo he is an apostate, who boasts of having destroyed popery, while at Paris he is the restorer of the Christian religion.

Sometimes a fanatic and sometimes a philosopher, he always arranges his scenes beforehand. A sovereign, who takes lessons in attitudes of an actor, leaves no doubt about his true character. Desirous to appear original, he is almost always an imitator, and his imitations are so coarse that they lose their effect. He is always endeavoring to say or do something extraordinary. Affecting the character of a universal genius, he talks indiscriminately of the finances and the theatres,—of war and of fashions,—determines at once the fate of kings and constables,—dates from the Kremlin a decree to regulate the play-houses, and on the day of a great battle sends off an order to arrest a few silly women at Paris.

“When Bonaparte turned the Directory out of office, he addressed them in the following terms: ‘What have you done with that France which I left in so brilliant a condition? I left you at peace: I find you involved in war: I left you millions of money, which I brought from Italy, I find you without a franc in the treasury. What have you done with the hundred thousand Frenchmen, my companions in arms and in glory? They are dead. This state of things cannot last; in less than three years, it would bring us to a despotism. But we want a republic: a republic resting on the basis of equality, of good morals, of political toleration, of civil liberty.’

“Now then: man of mischief, we take you at your word. What have you done with this glorious France? Where are her treasures, the millions brought not from Italy only, but from all parts of Europe? What have you done, I say, not with the hundred thousand only, but with the five million Frenchmen, whom we all knew and loved,—our kindred, our friends, our brothers? This state of things cannot last: it has plunged us into a frightful despotism. You wanted a republic, and you have given us slavery. We on our part wish for a monarchy founded on the basis of equality of rights, of good morals, of political and religious toleration, of civil liberty. Have you given us such a monarchy? What have you done for us? What do we owe to your government? Who was it that murdered D’Enghien, that tortured Pichegru, that exiled Moreau, that loaded the sovereign Pontiff with chains, that kidnapped the Spanish princes, that began an impious war? It was you. Who is it that has lost us our colonies, destroyed our commerce, opened America to the English, corrupted our morals, deprived us of our children: that has desolated our families, laid waste

with fire and sword more than a thousand leagues of country, that has spread a horror of the very name of France through the whole world? It is you. Who exposed France to the plague, to invasion, to dismemberment, to conquest? You, I repeat, you. Here are questions which you could not have addressed to the Directory, and which France now calls upon you to answer. How much more guilty you are than those men, whom you would not permit to govern! A legitimate and hereditary monarch, who should have heaped upon his kingdom a small portion only of the miseries which you have brought upon us, would have endangered his crown: and shall you, a usurper and a foreigner, derive security from the very calamities of which you have been the cause? Shall you be permitted to go on, until you have nothing to reign over but sepulchres? No. Misfortune restores to us our rights. We will no longer offer up our children to Moloch; we will have no more to do with your conscription, your police, your censorship, your nightly massacres, and the rest of your abominable forms of tyranny. Not France only, but all mankind bear witness against you. All men call for vengeance on you in the name of religion, of morality, of liberty. Where have you not carried desolation? In what quarter of the globe is there a family so obscure as to have escaped your ravages! The Spaniard in his mountains, the Illyrian in his valley, the Italian under his cloudless sky, the German, the Russian, the Prussian, from the ruins of their smoking villages, demand of you the sons whom you have slaughtered, the tents, the cottages, the castles, the temples that you have burned. You compelled them to come to France, and recover in your palaces the blood-stained spoils that you had taken from them. The voice of the world pronounces you the greatest criminal that ever lived. For it was not on barbarous and degenerate nations that you brought these miseries: in the midst of civilization, in an age of light, you have wielded the sword of an Attila, and governed on the principles of a Nero. Lay aside then your iron sceptre; descend from the heap of ruins which you call your throne. We treat you as you treated the Directory. Go! and may it be your only punishment to witness the joy which your fall will occasion in France, to behold with tears of rage the spectacle of the general felicity."

M. de Châteaubriand has himself, in some of his subsequent productions, qualified in part the extreme harshness of these

denunciations, which we introduce merely to shew how much farther the feeling of hostility to Napoleon has been carried by other writers of the highest pretensions, than it is by Dr. Channing. After all, the moral complexion of his character was determined in a great degree by the course that he took on his return from Egypt. Had he, at that time and afterwards, lent the aid of his transcendent ability to the cause of improvement and liberty, instead of employing it for his personal aggrandizement, he would have been ranked among the benefactors of the human race. In justification of his course at this period, it has sometimes been said that France was not in a condition to enjoy liberty;—that she required a master, and that it was an act of patriotism in Bonaparte to take possession of the vacant sceptre, which, if he had not seized it, he must have known would have fallen into utterly incapable hands. This apology would be more plausible, if, after assuming the dictatorship, he had employed his power in founding a free government, instead of an iron military despotism. This was what the liberal party in France and throughout the world expected of him, and it was a sort of vague hope that when he had conquered all his enemies and broken down all the arbitrary governments, he would finally lay aside the general's truncheon, and stand forth in his true character as an Apostle of Liberty, that kept up a lingering interest in him to the very last moment of his career among the friends of liberty throughout the world. On this head, Dr. Channing has some remarks, which are among the most original and judicious in the article, and which, if our limits permitted, we would gladly quote. The substance is, that after taking the government into his hands, instead of making himself a merely military despot, he should have established liberal institutions, corresponding in some degree with the public opinion of the time; that he should have placed himself at the head of a new order of things, which would have worn the appearance at least of an improvement in the social state, and would have come into contrast with the arbitrary forms and unmeaning pageantry of the other governments. This too he might have done, without relinquishing the immediate control of the executive power, had he limited the reach of his ambition to the magnificent prize, which was thrown as it were into his hands. Could he have been satisfied with the condition of a constitutional monarch of France, governing through the agency of liberal institutions and

wise laws, he might have held the throne for life, under any title which he thought proper to assume ; have descended in peace to an honored grave, and figured in the history of the world as the founder of a new and glorious dynasty. He had at times some indistinct notion that this was his true course, as appears not only from remarks which occasionally fell from him in conversation, but from his code and his public works. That he had not the steadiness to act systematically upon such a policy, proves that, with all his military genius and success, he had, as Dr. Channing justly remarks, no pretension to that highest order of intellectual greatness, which Bacon assigns to the *founders of empires*. His attention was constantly diverted by some tempting opportunity to engage in a new war, and it was probably the consciousness that war was his peculiar field of glory, rather than any settled project of universal empire, which led him to seize and even seek these opportunities, rather than attempt to avoid them. War, in fact, was his element, as it was his passion. There he was bold, powerful, original, commanding, in short, a man of genius in the highest sense of the word ; in other things he only exhibited the quickness, with which a man of genius will commonly seize the prominent points of any subject to which he happens to give a casual attention. Napoleon will be known to history as the greatest Captain of modern times, and he accomplished his destiny as such. He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword. His military passion and talent were the sources at once of his greatness and his ruin.

Dr. Channing's articles on Milton and Bonaparte, with a number of his sermons, and a few miscellaneous essays, were collected into a volume and published in the year 1830. Since that time there have also appeared in succession two volumes of his sermons, and several others have been published separately as they were successively delivered. The original and striking views on general subjects, which occur continually in these productions, and which seem to indicate a course of mature and systematic reflection upon all the great branches of moral philosophy in the widest sense of the term, have often suggested the hope that Dr. Channing might be induced to embody his views upon that science in the form of regular treatises. The feeble state of his health may perhaps have concurred with other causes, in preventing him from attempting any work of this description. We learn on every account with high satisfaction,

that this objection does not now exist, at least to the same extent to which it has heretofore done; and we indulge a hope, that a part of his future labors may take this direction. Our literature is very imperfectly supplied with standard works on these subjects, and a series, from the pen of Dr. Channing, would be welcomed, we are persuaded, as a public benefit on both sides of the Atlantic.

Independently of the articles on Milton and Bonaparte, and some others of a similar kind which we have not room to notice, the reputation of Dr. Channing rests entirely on his discourses. These may be considered either in reference to their form and immediate object as sermons, or to their substance as essays on various high and interesting questions in the several branches of intellectual, moral, and religious philosophy. We shall close this article, already longer than we originally intended, with a few remarks upon them under each of these points of view.

Considered merely as specimens of pulpit eloquence, the discourses of Dr. Channing are among the best that have appeared for many years; perhaps we may say with safety, that they are the best of the present time. Pulpit eloquence, as is well known, is not at present carried to a very high point of perfection in England. The deficiency of the established church in powerful preachers has been often remarked, and is dwelt upon at some length by Dr. Channing himself in his article on Fenelon. Paley, Porteus and Horsley, who belonged to the last generation, were men of more than ordinary power, but none of them rose quite to the first rank. At present the establishment, though it includes some eminent classical scholars, particularly the Bishop of London, and some political and literary characters of note, such as Bishop Philpotts and Sydney Smith, does not, as far as we recollect, contain a single person of great eminence in the pursuits and studies appropriate to the profession, and particularly in pulpit eloquence. To what circumstances this remarkable deficiency may be owing, we have not room here to investigate. It certainly holds out, *prima facie*, no very strong argument in favor of an established religion. The Scotch church can boast of one divine of high and not undeserved distinction in Dr. Chalmers, and we suppose that he may fairly be considered as the most eminent pulpit orator now living in Great Britain. His sermons are perhaps a little less rich in style than those of the late Robert Hall. Without disparagement to the merit of either, which is certainly great

in different ways, we should entertain no apprehension in regard to the result of a fair comparison of their works with those of Dr. Channing.

The sermons of Dr. Channing are, in fact, models in this kind of composition. The style is warm, vigorous and pointed, without affectation or effort at display. No writer is more sparing in the use of figures of speech, historical and poetical illustrations, delineations of characters, and all other merely rhetorical arts. He trusts for effect to the substance, and seems to aim at making his language, as nearly as possible, a simple and vigorous expression of his thoughts. We may add, that his manner of delivery has been formed precisely on the same principle. Though his voice is good and well managed, and the general effect of his speaking impressive, there is no appearance about him of a wish to display his powers of oratory, or indeed to bring before his hearers in any way the idea of himself. You feel, on the contrary, that you are listening to a person, whose consciousness of self is absorbed in the deep interest with which he enters into his subject, and whose only effort is to communicate, as directly and as promptly as he can, to the minds of his audience, the thoughts and feelings with which his own is swelling and laboring. This is the perfection of eloquence in all its departments, and most especially that of the pulpit, where the remotest approach to affectation is not only out of place, but absolutely offensive.

In his occasional discourses, Dr. Channing judiciously allows himself a greater latitude in point of time, than is usual in the ordinary performances of the Sabbath, and thus obtains the necessary space for a full development of his subject. Some of these occasional discourses will bear a very good comparison with the most powerful sermons of the first English divines of former times; and we are happy to add that, with the recent improvement in his health, Dr. Channing seems to have gained a redoubled flow of talent and eloquence. The sermons which he has published this year, and particularly the one addressed to the Fraternity of Churches, on the Ministry for the Poor, which is now before us, are among the very best that he has ever delivered. Indeed, we hardly know, within the compass of this branch of literature, a work which exhibits a more remarkable combination of the highest and purest eloquence, with the most profound and, at the same time, per-

factly practical and intelligible wisdom. We extract the following passage as a specimen.

“The true cultivation of a human being consists in the development of great moral ideas; that is, the Ideas of God, of Duty, of Right, of Justice, of Love, of Self-sacrifice, of Moral Perfection as manifested in Christ, of Happiness, of Immortality, of Heaven. The elements or germs of these Ideas belong to every soul, constitute its essence, and are intended for endless expansion. These are the chief distinctions of our nature; they constitute our humanity. To unfold these, is the great work of our being. The Light in which these Ideas rise on the mind, the Love which they awaken, and the Force of Will, with which they are brought to sway the outward and inward life, — here, and here only, are the measures of human cultivation.

“These views shew us, that the highest culture is within the reach of the poor. It is not knowledge poured on us from abroad, but the development of the elementary principles of the soul itself, which constitutes the true growth of a human being. Undoubtedly, knowledge from abroad is essential to the awakening of these principles. But that, which conduces most to this end, is offered alike to rich and poor. Society and Experience, Nature and Revelation, our chief moral and religious teachers, and the great quickeners of the soul, do not open their schools to a few favorites, do not initiate a small caste into their mysteries, but are ordained by God to be lights and blessings to all.

“The highest culture, I repeat it, is in reach of the poor, and is sometimes attained by them. Without science, they are often wiser than the philosopher. The astronomer disdains them, but they look above his stars. The geologist disdains them, but they look deeper than the earth's centre; they penetrate their own souls, and find there mightier, diviner elements, than upheaved continents attest. In other words, the great ideas, of which I have spoken, may be, and often are, unfolded more in the poor man, than among the learned and renowned; and in this case the poor man is the most cultivated. For example, take the idea of Justice. Suppose a man, eminent for acquisitions of knowledge, but in whom this idea is but faintly developed. By justice he understands little more than respect for the rights of property. That it means respect for all the rights, and especially for the moral claims of every human being, of the lowest as well as most exalted, has perhaps never entered his mind, much less been expanded and invigorated into a broad, living conviction. Take now the case of a poor man, to whom, under Christ's teaching, the idea of the Just has become real, clear, bright, and strong; who recognises, to its full extent, the right of property, though it operates

against himself; but who does not stop here; who comprehends the higher rights of men as rational and moral beings, their right to exercise and unfold all their powers, their right to the means of improvement, their right to search for truth and to utter their honest convictions, their right to consult first the monitor in their own breasts and to follow wherever it leads, their right to be esteemed and honored according to their moral efforts, their right, when injured, to sympathy and succor against every oppressor. Suppose, I say, the poor man to rise to the comprehension of this enlarged justice, to revere it, to enthrone it over his actions, to render to every human being, friend or foe, near or far off, whatever is his due, to abstain conscientiously, not only from injurious deeds, but from injurious thoughts, judgments, feelings, and words. Is he not a more cultivated man, and has he not a deeper foundation and surer promise of truth, than the student, who, with much outward knowledge, does not comprehend men's highest rights, whose scientific labors are perhaps degraded by injustice towards his rivals, who, had he power, would fetter every intellect, which threatens to outstrip his own?

"The great idea, on which human cultivation especially depends, is that of God. This is the concentration of all that is beautiful, glorious, holy, blessed. It transcends immeasurably in worth and dignity all the science treasured up in Cyclopædias or libraries; and this may be unfolded in the poor, as truly as in the rich. It is not an idea to be elaborated by studies, which can be pursued only in leisure or by opulence. Its elements belong to every soul, and are especially to be found in our moral nature, in the idea of duty, in the feeling of reverence, in the approving sentence which we pass on virtue, in our disinterested affections, and in the wants and aspirations which carry us towards the Infinite. There is but one way of unfolding these germs of the idea of God, and that is, faithfulness to the best convictions of duty and of the Divine Will, which we have hitherto gained. God is to be known by obedience, by likeness, by sympathy, that is, by moral means, which are open alike to rich and poor. Many a man of science has not known him. The pride of science, like a thick cloud, has hidden from the philosopher the Spiritual Sun, the only true light, and for want of this quickening ray, he has fallen in culture far, very far, below the poor.

"These remarks have been drawn from me by the proneness of our times to place human culture in physical knowledge, and especially in degrees of it denied to the mass of the people. To this knowledge I would on no account deny great value. In its place, it is an important means of human improvement. I look with admiration on the intellectual force, which combines and masters scattered facts, and by analysis and comparison as-

cends to the general laws of the material universe. But the philosopher, who does not see in the force within him something nobler than the outward nature which he analyzes, who, in tracing mechanical and chemical agencies, is unconscious of a higher action in his own soul, who is not led by all finite powers to the Omnipotent, and who does not catch, in the order and beauty of the universe, some glimpses of Spiritual Perfection, stops at the very threshold of the temple of truth. Miserably narrow is the culture, which confines the soul to Matter, which turns it to the Outward, as to something nobler than itself. I fear, the spirit of science, at the present day, is too often a degradation, rather than the true culture of the soul. It is the bowing down of the heaven-born spirit before unthinking mechanism. It seeks knowledge, rather for animal, transitory purposes, than for the nutriment of the imperishable inward life; and yet the worshippers of science pity or condemn the poor, because denied this means of cultivation. Unhappy poor! shut out from libraries, laboratories, and learned institutes! In view of this world's wisdom, it avails you nothing, that your own nature, manifested in your own and other souls, that God's word and works, that the ocean, earth, and sky are laid open to you; that you may acquaint yourselves with the Divine Perfections, with the character of Christ, with the duties of life, with the virtues, the generous sacrifices, and the beautiful and holy emotions, which are a revelation and pledge of Heaven. All these are nothing, do not lift you to the rank of cultivated men, because the mysteries of the telescope and microscope, of the air-pump and crucible, are not revealed to you! I would they were revealed to you. I believe the time is coming when Christian benevolence will delight in spreading all truth, and all refinements, through all ranks of society. But meanwhile be not discouraged. One ray of moral and religious truth is worth all the wisdom of the schools. One lesson from Christ will carry you higher, than years of study under those, who are too enlightened to follow the celestial guide.

"My hearers, do not condemn the poor man for his ignorance. Has he seen the Right? Has he felt the binding force of the Everlasting Moral Law? Has the beauty of virtue, in any of its forms, been revealed to him? Then he has entered the highest school of wisdom. Then a light has dawned within him, worth all the physical knowledge of all worlds. It almost moves me to indignation, when I hear the student exalting his science, which at every step meets impenetrable darkness, above the idea of Duty, and above veneration for goodness and God. It is true, and ought to be understood, that outward nature, however tortured, probed, dissected, never reveals truths so sublime or pre-

cious, as are wrapt up in the consciousness of the meanest individual, and laid open to every eye in the word of Christ.

“I trust it will not be inferred from what I have said of the superiority of moral and religious culture to physical science, that the former requires or induces a neglect or disparagement of the latter. No, it is the friend of all truth, the enemy of none. It is propitious to intellect, and incites to the investigation of the laws and order of the universe. This view deserves a brief illustration, because an opposite opinion has sometimes prevailed, because reproach has sometimes been thrown on religious culture, as if it narrowed the mind and barred it against the lights of physical science. There cannot be a more groundless charge. Superstition contracts and darkens the mind; but that living faith in moral and religious truth, for which I contend as the highest culture of rich and poor, is in no respect narrow or exclusive. It does not fasten the mind forever on a few barren doctrines. In proportion to its growth, it cherishes our whole nature, gives a wide range to thought, opens the intellect to the true, and the imagination to the beautiful. The great principles of moral and religious science are, above all others, fruitful, life-giving, and have intimate connexions with all other truth. The Love towards God and man, which is the centre in which they meet, is the very spirit of research into nature. It finds perpetual delight in tracing out the harmonies and vast and beneficent arrangements of creation, and inspires an interest in the works of the Universal Father, more profound, intense, enduring, than philosophical curiosity. I conceive, too, that faith in moral and religious truth has strong affinities with the scientific spirit, and thus contributes to its perfection. Both, for example, have the same objects, that is, universal truths. As another coincidence, I would observe, that it is the highest prerogative of scientific genius, to interpret obscure signs, to dart from faint hints to sublime discoveries, to read in a few fragments the history of vanished worlds and ages, to detect in the falling apple the law which rules the sphere. Now it is the property of moral and religious faith, to see in the finite the manifestations of the Infinite, in the present the germ of the boundless future, in the visible the traces of the Incomprehensible Unseen, in the power and wants of the soul its imperishable destiny. Such is the harmony between the religious and the philosophical spirit. It is to a higher moral and religious culture, that I look for a higher interpretation of nature. The laws of nature, we must remember, had their origin in the Mind of God. Of this they are the product, expression, and type; and I cannot but believe, that the human mind, which best understands, and which partakes most largely of the divine, has a power of interpreting nature,

which is accorded to no other. It has harmonies with the system, which it is to unfold. It contains in itself the principles, which gave birth to creation. As yet, science has hardly penetrated beneath the surface of nature. The principles of animal and vegetable life, of which all organized beings around us are but varied modifications, the forces which pervade or constitute matter, and the links between matter and mind, are as yet wrapt in darkness ; and how little is known of the adaptations of the physical and the spiritual world to one another. Whence is light to break in on these depths of creative wisdom ? I look for it to the spirit of philosophy, baptized, hallowed, exalted, made piercing by a new culture of the moral and religious principles of the human soul.

“The topic opens before me as I advance. The superiority of moral and religious to all other culture, is confirmed by a throng of arguments not yet touched. The peculiar wisdom which this culture gives, by revealing to us the end, the Ultimate Good of our being, which nothing else teaches ; the peculiar power which it gives, power over ourselves, so superior to the most extensive sway over the outward universe ; the necessity of moral and religious culture to make knowledge a blessing, to save it from being a curse ; these are weighty considerations which press on my mind, but cannot be urged. They all go to shew, that the culture which the poor may receive, is worth all others ; that in sending among them religious and moral influences, you send the highest good of the universe.”

This passage is at once a fair specimen of the author's style as a pulpit orator, and a sort of compendium of his whole philosophical doctrine. We have spoken of him as belonging to the class of philosophers or original thinkers on general subjects, and we had intended to offer some remarks upon his sermons considered as expositions of his opinions ; but the space remaining to us would not now allow us to do this at any great length, nor is it necessary to add much upon this head, for those of our readers who are able to enter into the spirit, and appreciate the value of the sublime trains of thought, exhibited in the above extract. The merit of Dr. Channing as a philosopher does not lie in arranging and digesting, a little more methodically than preceding writers, the common-places of some of the branches of moral or natural science, or even in directing the public attention to some before unobserved facts or principles in these great departments of knowledge. Achievements of this kind, though they have their value, and, in many instances, a very great one, belong after all to an order of inqui-

ries of secondary importance. There is much in the works of Dr. Channing, as of most other philosophical writers of much volume, which comes under this head, as, for example, his theories on the controverted points in theology, on the progressive character of the human mind, and on the importance of government as an agent in promoting the advancement of civilization, and the welfare of society. His speculations on all these subjects, as on others that might be mentioned, have to a greater or less extent the character of novelty, and their results, if true, must be received as discoveries in moral science. But it is not, we think, on these speculations, however interesting and in many respects valuable, that his reputation and merit as a philosopher are mainly founded. The value of his views on the controverted points in divinity, will be differently estimated by the different sects ; and the whole subject, as we have intimated above, may not improbably lose a part of its present supposed importance with the decay of the excitement, which has grown out of the contest. As to the other questions to which we have adverted, the progressive character of the mind, and the value of government as an agent in the improvement of society, we entertain some doubts, whether the peculiar views of Dr. Channing will be finally confirmed by the verdict of an enlightened public opinion. His theory of progress has not yet been stated with sufficient fulness and precision, to enable us to ascertain exactly what it is ; but as far as we are able to form a conjecture, it is hardly consistent with the analogy of nature, or the results of experience. We also think that he is rather disposed to underrate the importance of government, as an instrument for promoting the improvement of society. On some future occasion we may venture, perhaps, to examine more fully the opinions of Dr. Channing upon these topics. We have adverted to them here, in part, for the purpose of shewing that the approbation which we have expressed of his character and works is not a mere unmeaning tribute of applause to a public favorite, but is the result of our own unbiassed and independent judgment.

The merit of Dr. Channing as a philosopher does not, therefore, as we conceive, lie so much in any systematic exposition of moral science, which he has not attempted, or in any new and peculiar theories of his own invention, as in feeling himself, and bringing home to the hearts of others, with extraordinary distinctness and power, the simple but sublime

truths which lie at the bottom of all religion and all philosophy. There are two, and only two, essentially opposite views of the nature and destiny of man, and his relation to the universe of which he forms a part. One considers him as a being superior in degree only to the animals that surround him, and intended like them for a transitory existence, which is to terminate in the dissolution of the body, and of which the only rational employment is to devote it, as it passes, to sensual pleasure. This is a doctrine which seems to be sanctioned by the practice of a large majority of our race, at all times and in all countries, but which, stated as a philosophical theory, is repugnant alike to common sense and common feeling, and has rarely appeared as such, excepting at periods of great and general corruption, on the eve of some tremendous revolution, like those which preceded the fall of the Roman Empire and the present agitations in Christendom. It is then avowed in its naked deformity, spreads itself for awhile among communities prepared by their vices to receive it, the precursor and, to a certain extent, the immediate instrument of political ruin, and after doing its work of desolation, is again rejected with loathing, and gives way, as we now see it doing throughout Europe, to a general reaction in favor of truth.

The other view of our nature to which we have alluded, considers man as connected by strong temporary ties with the sensual world, but belonging essentially to a higher one, — destined to unfold new powers and pass through new scenes of action and enjoyment in future conditions, and to approach more nearly, by a gradual course of progress, to the perfection and purity of that high Intelligence of which his own is a faint image. This is the doctrine which, in all common times, and in all the ordinary states of society, has commanded the general assent of the world. It recommends itself with equal power to the reasoning head and the feeling heart. It beams upon us from the glorious orbs that enlighten us from above, and the countless wonders and beauties of the spectacle of nature around us and beneath our feet. The grand movements of the universal system reveal it to us in the harmony by which they are governed, and which the ancients fancifully described as the music of the spheres; while a voice within whispers it from the secret recesses of every uncorrupted heart. It forms, as we have said, the basis of all religion and all philosophy. We see its consolatory light gleaming faintly through a veil of

error and fable, in the Indian's dream of a hunter's paradise "beyond the cloud-capt hill" that bounds his earthly vision ;— in the monstrous creations of the Oriental mythology, and in the elegant and graceful forms of Grecian art. It flowed in strains of honied eloquence from the lips of Socrates at the banquet with his friends, and over that dark cup which the ungrateful city of Minerva prepared for the last hours of the wisest of her sons. Cicero repeated the lesson in his beautiful Tusculan retreat. Aurelius proclaimed it anew from the throne of the world. Revelation has given to it the sanction of her mysterious oracles. It is the Wisdom of the Old Testament ; the Faith and Hope of the New. Scepticism herself hardly ventures to call it in question. "Who," says Goethe, speaking in the character of Faust, a personage supposed to be abandoned to the influence of an Evil Spirit, and intended as a type of human nature beset with temptation,

"Who dares name Him ?

Who avow that he believes in Him ?

Who that feels, dares to say I believe Him not ?

The All-Embracer, the All-Sustainer,

Does He not embrace and sustain thee, me, Himself ?

Does not Heaven spread itself on high above us ?

Lies not the Earth firmly here below ?

Do not the eternal stars beam on us brightly from their spheres ?

Is not all this thronging to thy head and heart,

And weaving itself in eternal mystery

Invisibly, visibly around thee ?

Fill then thy heart with it, vast as it is,

And when thou art wholly blest with the feeling,

Call it happiness, — heart, — love, — God !

I have no name for it. Feeling is all in all.

Names are sound and smoke, clouding heaven's glow."

This view of human nature, which may be called the spiritual one, and which forms the basis of all religion and philosophy, recommends itself, therefore, with almost irresistible power to the minds and hearts of men, but it comes to them generally mixed with a large alloy of fable and error. The multitude, swallowed up in temporary interests, too exclusively occupied in the pursuit of pleasure, power or gain, to devote much care to the immortal mind, adopt the mixture of truth and fable, which happens to be the received opinion of their own time and country, with implicit faith, and we may add, for any practical purpose, with entire indifference.

In this way, the clear light of truth is gradually obstructed, and sometimes almost wholly lost. It belongs to a few superior spirits, and it is the proof of their superiority, to feel the importance of these views, to separate them from the mass of error with which they are mingled, not so much by attacking the false as by insisting on the true, and to bring them home with power to the hearts of others. This is the leading object of the writings of Dr. Channing, considered as expositions of general principles. He knows and feels that philosophy, rightly understood, is, as we have repeatedly remarked, only another name for religion. "It is the property of moral and religious faith," to use his own fine expressions in the above extract, "it is the property of moral and religious faith, to see in the Finite the manifestations of the Infinite, in the Present the germ of the boundless Future, in the Visible the traces of the Incomprehensible Unseen, in the power and wants of the soul its imperishable destiny."

This is the sum and substance of the philosophical doctrine of Dr. Channing, and of all true philosophy, by whatever name it may be known. It is when thus understood, that philosophy becomes indeed, as Milton calls it, divine; that its cultivation is identical with the progress of truth, virtue, civilization and human happiness. The men whose superior talents and purity of purpose qualify them to take a leading part in carrying on this work, are the great benefactors of our race, and we reckon Dr. Channing among the number. We offer him our grateful acknowledgments for the good he has already done, and we trust that his future labors will allow us frequent opportunities for renewing them.

ART. VII. — *Study of Natural History.*

A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural History. By WILLIAM SWAINSON. London. 1834.

IT is well to take every opportunity to extend a taste for the study of Natural History; for popular as it is, compared with former days, it does not yet inspire a general interest at all proportionate to its importance. Doubtless it is made the subject of lectures in all the cities, and most of the villages of our land; and we could not say that anything was wanting, if a taste for